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**HOUSE BILL NO. 1909**

Offered January 13, 2025

Prefiled January 6, 2025

*A BILL to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 3.2 an article numbered 1.1, consisting of sections numbered 3.2-108.3 through 3.2-108.8, relating to Virginia Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence established; report.*

Patrons—Kent, Fowler and Green

Referred to Committee on Education

**Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:**

**1. That the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Chapter 1 of Title 3.2 an article numbered 1.1, consisting of sections numbered 3.2-108.3 through 3.2-108.8, as follows:**

*Article 1.1.*

*Virginia Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence.*

**§ 3.2-108.3. Virginia Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence; purpose.**

*The Virginia Commission for Agricultural Education Excellence (the Commission) is established as an advisory commission in the executive branch of state government. The Commission shall be administratively housed within the Department and shall be administered, staffed, and supported jointly by the Department and the Department of Education. The purpose of the Commission is to assist in developing a statewide plan for agricultural education and to coordinate with the Department and the Department of Education on the implementation of related agricultural education programming.*

**§ 3.2-108.4. Membership; terms; quorum; meetings.**

*The Commission shall have a total membership of 30 members that shall consist of eight legislative members, 12 nonlegislative citizen members, and 10 ex officio members. Members shall be appointed as follows: four members of the House of Delegates, consisting of the senior member representing each major political party on the House Committee on Education and the House Committee on Agriculture, Chesapeake and Natural Resources, to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates; four members of the Senate, consisting of the senior member representing each major political party on the Senate Committee on Education and Health and the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Natural Resources, to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules; four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, consisting of two members of the business community with knowledge of agricultural education and two farmers who engage in activities, practices, and procedures to produce and prepare for market poultry, livestock, and their products or who engages in the production and harvesting of agricultural, agronomic, horticultural, silvicultural, or aquacultural crops or commodities and whose operation is conducted on not less than 10 contiguous acres in area or, if less than 10 contiguous acres in area, has an anticipated yearly gross income of at least \$10,000; four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Senate Committee on Rules, consisting of two representatives of agricultural sciences, one of whom shall be a faculty member of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and one of whom shall be a faculty member of the College of Agriculture of Virginia State University, and two teachers of career and technical agriculture, one of whom shall be a teacher in a career and technical center and one of whom shall be a teacher in a traditional public school in a local school division; and four nonlegislative citizen members to be appointed by the Governor, subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, one of whom is a representative of the agricultural processing and agricultural marketing industries, one of whom is a representative of the Virginia Cooperative Extension with a background in or knowledge of agricultural education, one of whom is a representative of a community college with a background in or knowledge of agricultural education, and one of whom is an administrator of a local school division that offers a program of agricultural education. The Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, the Secretary of Education, the Lieutenant Governor, the Commissioner of Agriculture and Consumer Services, the Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Workforce Development and Advancement, the President and CEO of the Virginia Economic Development Partnership, the executive director of the Virginia FFA Association, the president of the Virginia Association of Agricultural Educators, the president of the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, and the agricultural education specialist at the Department of Education, or their designees, shall serve ex officio with voting privileges. Nonlegislative citizen members of the Commission shall be citizens of the Commonwealth.*

*Legislative members and ex officio members of the Commission shall serve terms coincident with their terms of office.*

*Appointments to fill vacancies, other than by expiration of a term, shall be for the unexpired terms.*

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59 *Vacancies shall be filled in the same manner as the original appointments. All members may be reappointed.*

60 *After the initial staggering of terms, nonlegislative citizen members shall be appointed for a term of four*  
61 *years. No nonlegislative citizen member shall serve more than two consecutive four-year terms. The*  
62 *remainder of any term to which a member is appointed to fill a vacancy shall not constitute a term in*  
63 *determining the member's eligibility for reappointment.*

64 *The Commission shall elect a chairman and vice-chairman from among its membership. A majority of the*  
65 *members shall constitute a quorum. The Commission shall meet no more than four times each year. The*  
66 *meetings of the Commission shall be held at the call of the chairman or whenever the majority of the*  
67 *members so request.*

68 **§ 3.2-108.5. Compensation; expenses.**

69 *Legislative members of the Commission shall receive such compensation as provided in § 30-19.12, and*  
70 *nonlegislative citizen members shall receive such compensation for the performance of their duties as*  
71 *provided in § 2.2-2813. All members shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred*  
72 *in the performance of their duties as provided in §§ 2.2-2813 and 2.2-2825. Funding for the costs of*  
73 *compensation and expenses of the members shall be provided by the Department.*

74 **§ 3.2-108.6. Powers and duties of the Commission; report.**

75 *The Commission shall have the following powers and duties:*

76 *1. Develop a model for statewide competencies, credentials, and certificates for agricultural education*  
77 *programs based on high-demand occupations as defined by the Virginia Office of Education Economics.*

78 *2. Consult with the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia, the Virginia Community College*  
79 *System, and local school divisions to facilitate articulation agreements with public institutions of higher*  
80 *education.*

81 *3. Provide support and technical assistance to supervised agricultural experience programs based on*  
82 *student needs.*

83 *4. Provide support and coordination for statewide and local activities related to FFA programs.*

84 *5. In consultation with and with the approval of the Department of Education, develop guidelines to*  
85 *identify the circumstances under which a student who successfully completes an academic course, program,*  
86 *or activity for credit may apply the credit toward the completion of an agricultural education program. Such*  
87 *guidelines shall be posted in a publicly accessible format and location on the Department of Education's*  
88 *website within 15 days of approval. The Department of Education shall review the guidelines at least once*  
89 *every five years. Any proposed update to the guidelines shall be developed in consultation with the C*  
90 *ommission.*

91 *6. Annually submit a report to the Governor and the General Assembly on the status of agricultural*  
92 *education in the Commonwealth in which it (i) outlines agricultural education programs and achievements,*  
93 *(ii) assesses the trends and needs in secondary and both formal and informal postsecondary agricultural*  
94 *education and training, (iii) investigates and assesses workforce trends in the agriculture and food industry,*  
95 *(iv) assesses and makes programming recommendations for meeting the training needs of individuals not*  
96 *pursuing formal postsecondary education, (v) considers the manner in which funds are used to support*  
97 *agricultural education activities, (vi) highlights new initiatives and recommends future program needs in*  
98 *agricultural education, and (vii) makes recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly*  
99 *regarding legislative or regulatory changes to improve agricultural education.*

100 *7. In addition to the report required pursuant to subdivision 6, submit to the Governor and the General*  
101 *Assembly an annual report for publication as a report document as provided in the procedures of the*  
102 *Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and reports. The*  
103 *chairman shall submit to the Governor and the General Assembly an annual executive summary of the*  
104 *interim activity and work of the Commission no later than the first day of each regular session of the General*  
105 *Assembly. The executive summary shall be submitted for publication as a report document as provided in the*  
106 *procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the processing of legislative documents and*  
107 *reports and shall be posted on the General Assembly's website.*

108 **§ 3.2-108.7. Staffing.**

109 *The Department and the Department of Education shall provide staff support to the Commission. All*  
110 *agencies of the Commonwealth shall provide assistance to the Commission, upon request.*

111 **§ 3.2-108.8. Sunset.**

112 *This article shall expire on July 1, 2028.*

113 **2. That the initial appointments of nonlegislative citizen members to the Virginia Commission for**  
114 **Agricultural Education Excellence shall be staggered as follows: four members for a term of one year**  
115 **appointed by the Speaker of the House of Delegates, four members for a term of two years appointed**  
116 **by the Senate Committee on Rules, and four members for a term of three years appointed by the**  
117 **Governor.**